

Atty. Docket No.: 01-VE22.20 CON1
Serial No. 09/909,784
Customer Number: 25,537

REMARKS

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This amendment is responsive to the Office Action of June 28, 2006. Claims 20-41 were pending in the application. Claims 1-19 had previously been canceled.

Claims 26, 30, 31 and 33-35 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Rivers et al., (U.S. Patent 6,028,858, hereinafter "Rivers"). This rejection is overcome for the following reasons.

Claims 27-29, 32, and 36-38 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims (Office Action, page 4).

Claims 20-25 and 39-41 are allowed (Office Action, page 4).

Applicants do not acquiesce in the rejection of Applicants' claims based on Rivers, but have decided to expedite issuance by amending the claims to include the allowable subject matter that was found by the Examiner. Applicants hereby expressly reserve their rights to pursue the claims prior to the current amendment, or other claims, by way of a continuing application or the like.

Accordingly, Applicants have amended independent claim 26 to include the limitations of allowable claim 27, and have canceled claim 27 without prejudice or disclaimer. Claim 28, dependent from currently amended claim 26, is also allowable at least because it depends from allowable base claim 26.

Accordingly, Applicants have also re-written allowable claim 29 in independent form, thereby rendering claim 29 allowable.

Accordingly, Applicants have also amended claim 30 to include the limitations of claim 31 and allowable claim 32, thereby rendering claim 30 allowable. Claims 31-32 are canceled without prejudice or disclaimer.

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Accordingly, Applicants have also amended claim 33 to include the limitations allowable claim 36, thereby rendering claim 33 allowable. Claim 36 is canceled without prejudice or disclaimer.

Accordingly, Applicants have also re-written allowable claim 37 in independent form, thereby rendering claim 37 allowable. Claims 34 and 35 are amended herein to depend from allowable claim 37 thereby rendering claims 34 and 35 allowable.

Accordingly, claims 20-26, 28-30, 34-35 and 37-41 are pending in this application and are allowable for reasons given above.

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CONCLUSION

Reconsideration and allowance are respectfully requested in view of the amendments and remarks made hereinabove.

If a fee is due beyond that authorized in other papers accompanying this Reply, please charge our Deposit Account No. 07-2347 therefor. To the extent necessary, a petition for extension of time under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136 is hereby made, the fee for which should be charged to the aforementioned account.

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Respectfully submitted,

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